Educational Philosophy and the Impact on the Classroom

By use of various readings and self-assessments my journey to discover my personal educational philosophy has been a never-ending one. I see my philosophy and perspectives going through this constant state of change making it nearly impossible to pinpoint one specific philosophy as my own. I don’t necessarily think this is a bad thing, I think it may help me cater to my students better. Taking into account all of my own personal beliefs to create a sort of integrated philosophy if you will, which I stress is not yet set in stone, has brought me to this conclusion of how my classroom will be impacted. WhenI was reading about the four main philosophies, I felt connected in multiple ways to all of them, I also felt disconnected in multiple ways to all four. Upon taking the philosophy assessment, I scored highest in existentialism, perennialism, and pragmatism. When diving deeper into the philosophies and looking at the eight sub-philosophies I connected very strongly with Humanism, Constructivism, Reconstructionism, and Progressivism. So, with a rather unusual accumulation of bits and pieces of multiple philosophies, this is how my classroom will be impacted, for now.

Classroom Organization – I feel as though the general layout of my classroom will change periodically. My desk, cabinets, and larger items will remain in the same location, but the way students will be sitting will be changed multiple times. I like the idea of students being in groups for some activities, but being in a circle for other activities. I know I definitely want to avoid the desks in rows. I will try to keep my classroom very organized so that I can easily access whatever it is I need to get to, but my students can have the same ease of access to the things they need to access. I will have an anonymous question box near the door so students can drop stuff in on the way out. I want to have a lot of visuals in my classroom, like posters about various health issues. I want to also have pamphlets about various health issues available for students to take and look at. I want my classroom to be easily maneuverable; everything will have an appropriate place making the classroom more spacious.

Motivation – I am a very energetic person and I am very passionate about health! I am hoping these attributes will promote motivation within my students, but I am aware that not all students will be motivated because of my enthusiasm. I plan to motivate my students in a number of ways with individual projects and group projects, writing assignments, activities that get people involved and up and moving, use visual aids, movies, and audio, and also use lecture-type techniques. I like allowing students to express themselves in a way in which they feel comfortable. I also like using current issues, which is very easy to do with Health, because students can relate to it. Hopefully by thinking like a student I will be able to promote motivation within all of my students. I hope that my enthusiasm, passion, and unique and varied teaching techniques encourage motivation, enthusiasm, and passion in each and every one of my students.

Content Area – Health is such a broad topic. There is a lot to cover in not a lot of time. I think that because I have a personal educational philosophy that is a combination of multiple other philosophies it can actually help me accomplish getting done what needs to be done. I will be able to get the attention of all my students and also assure that they are not only receiving the content knowledge, but that they are processing and understanding it as well.

Assessment – When it comes to assessments I like to promote student freedom. I personally despise tests, standardized or not, however I know some students prefer to take tests opposed to writing papers or making a project. I want my students to express mastery of the content in whatever way they know how to. I will have created a test for those students who would like to take a test, but I also will allow students to write a paper or make a project, whether it is a poster, skit, song, etc. I, as the teacher, will be able to see whether the student has actually grasped the content or not based on their performance in whichever assessment form they choose. I realize this seems like a lot of work, but it really isn’t. I will have to make a test and then I will also have to make various rubrics, but still, I don’t see that as being a problem. It may seem time consuming, but it is a lot less time consuming than having to re-teach certain materials or even failing a student and having them have to retake the class all together. I want my students to succeed and I want the assessments to show this success and any amount of time put into it is worth it to me. When it comes to homework, I want to decrease the amount of homework given out to my students. When I assign homework it is because it is meaningful, it is not busy work. It will consist of issues and ideas that we will discuss in the next class. I will also have an exit ticket or something similar once a week as a means of checking in with my students. I want to know where they are at and if they are understanding everything.

Classroom Climate – Classroom climate is very important in health education. I want my classroom to have a positive energy that makes all students feel comfortable and accepted. I have a strict “what is said in class stays in class” policy. As a class we are sharing our personal opinions and stories because we feel safe and comfortable with one another. I know health is a very sensitive and often taboo subject and at times it can be embarrassing and uncomfortable to talk about, which is normal, and I want my students to know that these feelings are normal and it is okay to feel that way. My classroom will be a “judgment free” zone and will stress to my students the importance of remembering that everyone is different.

Learning Focus – As I have said before, when it comes to health in school there is a lot to cover and not a lot of time to cover it in. Most importantly, I hope my students learn how to become healthier individuals not just for a day, but for life. I want to teach them how to make healthy choices and have a healthy balance of all aspects of health. I also want to help my students discover who they are and who they want to become. I also want them to discover how they learn and use that newfound knowledge to help them achieve more in life, to feel more accomplished and have a positive image and self-worth.

Technology Integration – Although I personally don’t like the amount of technology that is being pushed into education, I understand its value. I will definitely use technology in my classroom, but I don’t feel the need to use it all class or even every class. I still believe in the importance of having meaningful interactions and discussions when it comes to learning. Technology will definitely help me when teaching and it will help my students when showing their mastery. Not to mention our nation’s technological shift, which I believe is slowly forcing us to become dependent on technology, makes it almost impossible to not allow technology integration to take place within the classroom.

Teacher and Leadership Style – I see myself as a facilitator more so than a teacher. I want to encourage my students to travel a path of self discovery and see that the answers can be within them. I don’t expect my students to do all the work though, I know that I have to give them stepping stones to achieve this and guide them through the learning process. I will give them information in various ways about the content, but when it comes to how they learn and how they express what they have learned I want it to be more individualized. For me, I have already learned it, I know it, this means I need to focus on the needs of my students, how I can help them learn and know it. I also know that health is very important to everyone, so I also want to help my students realize the importance of health and how our personal health affects us and the people around us. I have this passion for health already, and I want to create the same passion with in my students, I want to pull it out of them, I want them to see that learning is fun, it isn’t just about tests and homework. I want their education to be meaningful and I want to create leaders.